

Rob Hutsel is the President and CEO of The San Diego River Park Foundation, a nonprofit established in 2001 to create a better future for the San Diego River.

After a 34-million-gallon sewer spill entered the San Diego River, Rob and a few other volunteers got together to give the River a voice and to create a better future for it and San Diego. Rob was born and raised in San Diego and attended UC San Diego (UCSD) where he studied Urban Studies and Planning, and Physics. He has been a guest lecturer at UCSD, San Diego State University and at several international, national, and state conferences.

Rob has received numerous awards including the 2018 San Diego Fly Fishers William and Eileen Stroud Award, the 2009 San Diego State University President's Award, the River Network's 2008 National River Hero, and the 2003 County of San Diego Clean Water Champion. Under Rob's leadership, the Foundation has received international, national, state and local recognition including receiving in 2011 the US Department of the Interior's Take Pride in America National Award and Assemblymember Todd Gloria's Nonprofit of the Year.

Currently, Rob serves on the Board of Directors of the California Watershed Network, the Statewide Steering Committee of the California Urban Streams Partnership, and the County of San Diego's Park Advisory Board, representing District 4.

As lead staff for the Foundation, Rob has successfully completed more than 20 open space acquisitions, secured millions of dollars in federal, state and local funding and is responsible for the daily operations of this growing organization. At its heart, the Foundation continues to be the grassroots organization that Rob helped to start. Annually, it organizes more than 25,000 hours of volunteer service to help create a better future for the historic and important San Diego River.